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QUANTUM LEAP

AUGUST 8, 1955

Written

by

Deborah Pratt

"COLOR OF THE TRUTH"

#65013

QUANTUM LEAP

AUGUST 8, 1955

CAST

SAM BECKETT/JESSIE TYLER
THE OBSERVER

BILLY JOE BOB
TOAD
MIZ PATTY
MIZ MELNY
CLAYTON
NELL
SISSY
EFFIE
WILLIS
SHERIFF BLOUNT
DOCTOR
NURSE ETHEL
JESSIE TYLER

EXTRAS
DINER PATRONS

SETS

INTERIORS:

DINGY DINER
BUICK
MIZ MELNY'S HOUSE
 ENTRY
 PARLOR
 KITCHEN
 BACK DOOR
 DINING ROOM
PLYMOUTH
PICK-UP TRUCK
TYLER KITCHEN
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
EMERGENCY ROOM CORRIDOR
COURTHOUSE JAIL CELL

EXTERIORS:

TOWN SQUARE
 COURTHOUSE
 STREET
 POLICE STATION
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
RAILROAD CROSSING
CEMETERY
RIVER ROAD
MIZ MELNY'S HOUSE
HOSPITAL
EMERGENCY ENTRANCE
TYLER PORCH

VEHICLE

BUICK
PLYMOUTH
PICK-UP TRUCK
SHERIFF'S CAR

STOCK

FREIGHT TRAIN

#65013

QUANTUM LEAP

PLEASE NOTE:

The Cast and Set Lists reflect the following:

SCENE(S) ALREADY SHOT IN THE LAST EPISODE:

TO BE DETERMINED

SCENE(S) TO BE SHOT IN THE NEXT EPISODE:

Scenes 133 thru 135

QUANTUM LEAP

AUGUST 8, 1955

ACT ONE

1 QUANTUM LEAP IN 1

2 INT. DINGY DINER - INCLUDING SAM - DAY 2

The place looks as though it was built in the thirties and sort of updated to the forties but so rural that the fifties have barely touched it. Sam is standing near the door as a man in overalls pays his bill to the cashier.

3 NEW ANGLE - FEATURING SAM 3

The place is pretty full and by the clock on the back wall it's lunch time. Sam rubs his stomach and lets go a long sigh.

SAM'S VOICE

Quantum travel has its drawbacks, not the least of which is rarely being in one place long enough for a decent night's sleep or a square meal. So, I've learned that when the opportunity presents itself... to go for it.

4 SAM'S POV 4

At that moment a man gets up from the counter and crosses to pay his bill. A heavy set woman in a checkered waitress outfit with "Patty" embroidered across the heart-shaped hankie above her breast pocket, busses the spot and smiles at Sam.

5 ON SAM 5

He smiles back at her and crosses to the empty seat, grabbing a menu and sitting.

6 NEW ANGLE 6

The entire restaurant falls silent as every patron turns in utter shock to stare at Sam.

CONTINUED

6 CONTINUED

6

It takes Sam a moment but he feels the tension starting to mount. He looks to the woman next to him whose mouth is hanging open. The man to his right is repulsed and angered. It is then that Sam looks into the mirror behind the pie shelf.

7 SAM'S POV - REFLECTION IN MIRROR

7

He is a black man of about seventy, dressed in a neat but simple brown suit.

SAM
(stunned)
This has got to be a mistake.

8 FEATURE SAM

8

Two large, red-necked farm boys loom up behind him as the local Sheriff watches from a nearby table.

BILLY JOE BOB
Biggest mistake you ever made, boy.
(to his buddy)
Ain't that right, Toad?

TOAD
Right as rain, Billy Joe.

SAM'S VOICE
I didn't know if it was their names
or red necks that terrified me most.

As Sam turns to face Billy Joe and Toad, Miss Patty intervenes.

MIZ PATTY
Alright you two, now just cut it
out. I don't want to spend the
afternoon cleanin' up blood.
(to Sam)
Do I Jessie?

SAM
Uh, no. No, you don't.

MIZ PATTY
So why don't you just take Miz
Melnny's lunch and get, before these
boys lose what little control they
have.

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED

8

SAM
Miz Melny's lunch? Thanks.

Sam smiles, taking the small box and stepping out of the door.

9 EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY - ON SAM

9

He stands just outside the luncheonette and faces a small town square. A statue of some Confederate General stands facing north with a look of defiance on his face. The cars are unmistakably fifties and the dress of the men and women reflect the same era. Sam looks back to the door and catches his reflection in the glass.

SAM'S VOICE OVER
I'm black!
(liking it)
Incredible.

10 SAM'S POV - HIS REFLECTION

10

Beyond it, Toad and Billy Joe stride toward the door.

11 ON SAM

11

Sam moves away and out into the street.

SAM'S VOICE OVER
I didn't know exactly where I was,
but it was obviously too far south
to be a black man.

MISS MELNY'S VOICE
Jessie. Jessie Tyler you get over
here this instant.

Sam turns, looking for the direction of the voice.

12 SAM'S POV

12

He searches the square and spots an elderly well dressed woman of about seventy-five standing near a classic Buick four door. She is signalling him over.

13 WIDER ANGLE - FEATURING SAM

13

He smiles a moment and starts to walk.

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED

13

SAM'S VOICE

Maybe all I'm here to do is help a
little old lady across the street?
Or get her cat down out of the tree?
(looking at lunch)
Or deliver this lunch to....

SAM

Miz Melny?

MIZ MELNY

Jessie, it's got to be a hundred
degrees and you left me standing in
this heat.

Sam realizes that Jessie must have locked her out and
starts to search his pockets for the car keys.

MIZ MELNY

(continued)

I told you I was going to Sumter's
for five minutes...five minutes and
all you had to do was pick up my egg
salad from Miz Patty.

Sam has searched every pocket and looks to see if the keys
are locked inside. They're in the ignition.

SAM'S VOICE

Why do I get the feeling this isn't
going to be a good day.

MIZ MELNY

I could have made it myself for all
the trouble it takes. I never
understood what was so good about
her egg salad anyway. She wins the
county fair every summer and I swear
I don't understand why.

Sam instinctively pulls at the door and it opens. He
smiles and interrupts Miz Melny.

SAM

(smiling)

Excuse me Miz Melny, but the door
was open.

MIZ MELNY

What?

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED (2)

13

SAM

You didn't have to stand in the sun
because the car door was already
open.

He opens her door for her and offers a hand to help her
inside but she swipes it away.

MIZ MELNY

I told you a hundred times not to
leave my car unlocked.

She gets inside and fans herself, continuing to babble as
Sam throws his hands up and crosses to the front seat
sliding behind the wheel.

14 INT. CAR - FEATURING SAM

14

He starts the car and glances at himself in the mirror.

15 SAM'S POV - IN REAR VIEW MIRROR

15

Jessie's face looks back at him. The lines around the eyes
show the signs of time but the eyes themselves have a
sparkle of life that seems to put Sam at ease. He moves to
the side and reveals Miz Melny. Prim and proper in her
veiled hat and white cotton gloves she sits erect staring
at him with a scowl.

MIZ MELNY

What in tarnation are you staring
at?

16 NEW ANGLE - INCLUDING BOTH

16

Sam jumps as his eyes snap back to the road.

SAM

I was just wondering where we were
going?

MIZ MELNY

(flustered)

I swear Jessie, I'm the one that's
suppose to be old and senile. At
least that's what Clayton keeps
telling me. You can't drive mama.
You shouldn't be alone mama. You
need help around the house mama.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED

16

MIZ MELNY (Cont'd)

(beat)

Will you stop staring at me like a
lost sheep and drive?

SAM

(lying)

Well, Miz Melny, you remember when
....I fell down and bumped my head?
Well, since then I've had the
damndest time remembering things.

She looks at him suspiciously.

MIZ MELNY

First of all Mister Tyler you watch
your language around me.

SAM

Uh...sorry.

MIZ MELNY

Secondly, you didn't tell me a thing
about your head and third...third...

She drifts, losing her thought.

SAM

You were going to tell me where we
were going and how to get there.

MIZ MELNY

We are going where we have gone
every Saturday afternoon for the
past seven years. To see Charles.

She stares at him defiantly.

SAM

To see Charles.

MIZ MELNY

Oh for heavens sake, make a right on
Magnolia and drive toward the
hospital. And mind my wheels on
those railroad tracks.

Sam puts the car in gear and drives forward hoping it's the
right direction.

17 EXT. STREET - BUICK

17

We follow the car pull out into the near empty street. It isn't long before the paved road vanishes into dirt and the few buildings and homes melt into countryside. A sign with a cotton blossom on it reads: YOU ARE LEAVING RED DOG,
ALABAMA Pop. 2709

SAM'S VOICE

Of all the people I've leaped into,
Jessie should have been the
strangest.

18 INT. CAR - FEATURING SAM

18

Sam drives occasionally glancing back at Miz Melny who is watching the speedometer like a hawk.

SAM'S VOICE

(continuing)

But there was something very comfortable about him. Like putting on a pair of your favorite shoes or a jacket you've broken in just right.

(beat)

So, now that I've sort of accepted being Jessie, I just have to figure out what I'm here to do?

(looking back)

I had a feeling Miz Melny was the answer to that.

19 FEATURING MIZ MELNY

19

She shifts in her seat straining to get a look at the dashboard.

MIZ MELNY

How long are you going to let that turn signal blink? You made the turn five minutes ago.

Sam switches it off.

SAM

Sorry. I guess my mind was wandering.

MIZ MELNY

Well you just let your mind wander in your car and stop running down my battery.

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED

19

SAM

Oh, that won't run down the battery.
See it recharges...

MIZ MELNY

(cutting him off)

Don't you tell me about cars. My
Charles told me quite a lot about
them and how they work so I don't
need you telling me about my own
car.

SAM

(getting it)

Charles is your husband!

MIZ MELNY

Jessie, are you losing your mind?

MIZ MELNY

(pointing)

Now just turn in and stop with all
your tom foolery or I'm gonna get
all flustered. And I hate to visit
Charles when I'm all flustered.

(beat)

And mind the tracks.

20 EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - DAY

20

There are no signals or gates, just a sign indicating the
tracks. Sam drives the Buick slowly over the tracks and
turns into a large iron gate.

21 SAM'S POV - A CEMETERY

21

It is lush and overhung with Weeping Willows. Summer wild
flowers fill the older section that hasn't been kept up.

MIZ MELNY'S VOICE

Oh, Charles, they're letting this
place go to seed.

22 INT. CAR - FEATURING MIZ MELNY

22

She is forward on her seat. Her brow furrowed, upset by
what she sees. Before the car stops, she flings the door
open.

23 EXT. CEMETERY - WIDE SHOT

23

Miz Melny is trying to get herself from the car as Sam hurriedly turns off the ignition and jumps out to help her. She is near tears.

MIZ MELNY

They were supposed to take out all the weeds. They never take out the weeds.

24 TRACKING - ON SAM AND MIZ MELNY

24

Sam holds her arm as she walks transfixed to a single white angel with open arms that sadly looks down onto a plot at her feet. Miz Melny drops to her knees, tearing at the weeds. Sam stands a moment then drops down next to her.

MIZ MELNY

They promised, Jessie. They promised they'd clear the weeds.

Sam takes her weeds from her hands and sits her on the stone bench.

SAM

(gently)

Let me pull those for you.

(beat)

See, you've gotten your gloves all dirty.

She gives Sam the first smile we've seen from her and slowly takes the gloves from her hands. Sam pulls the weeds as she talks.

MIZ MELNY

I get so flustered Jessie, knowin' he's not bein' taken care of.

(beat)

We took such good care of each other. For fifty years that man never let a bad thing happen. Oh, we lost Beau but that wasn't his fault. Like Charles said, 'The good Lord needed that boy to come home.'

Sam smiles, finishing the last of the weeds.

SAM

It's hard losing somebody you love.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED

24

MIZ MELNY

I guess you know that as well as I do, Jessie. Your Sally lost four, didn't she?

SAM

I guess she did.

MIZ MELNY

(remembering)

Charles always thought highly of your Sally. When she passed, I remember him tellin' me there wasn't a finer negro woman in all of Alabama.

SAM

(after a beat)

I'll just throw these in the trash.

Lost in her memories, Miz Melny doesn't hear him. Sam smiles and walks away, looking for a trash can.

OBSERVER'S VOICE

They didn't supply trash cans in public places in the fifties.

25 WIDER ANGLE - INCLUDING AL

25

He is standing near a moss draped mausoleum. Sam crosses next to him. Dropping the weeds in a pile near the back.

OBSERVER

I can't remember exactly when the 'pitch in' campaign started. Maybe the seventies.

SAM

Well...

(with pride)

What do you think?

OBSERVER

What? What do I think about what?

SAM

I'm black.

Al looks at him for a second.

OBSERVER

So.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED

25

SAM

So. If I can bounce out a black man, that means the possibilities are limitless. Don't you think that's fascinating?

OBSERVER

Dangerous, yes. Fascinating ...menz a menz.

SAM

Dangerous? Why dangerous?

OBSERVER

You're a black man in 1955 in the south. Trust me, that's dangerous.

(remembering)

I've seen things that would curl your hair.

(looking at Sam)

Uh, no pun intended.

(beat)

I remember once in Selma...

SAM

(stopping him)

Al. Al. What does Ziggy say I'm here to do?

Al pulls out his hand computer and punches up the data.

OBSERVER

Mrs. Melony Elizabeth Charlotte Trafford, widow of the one-time Governor of Alabama, was killed when her car was struck and demolished by a freight train at that crossing....

(indicating)

...tomorrow afternoon.

Sam looks to the railroad crossing beyond the cemetery fence, then to Miz Melny, who's speaking softly to Charles as if he was sitting beside her.

SAM

(sadly)

No.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED (2)

25

OBSERVER

Afraid so.

(beat)

Ziggy's eighty-six point seven percent certain you're here to save Scarlett O'Hara from being squished by a choo-choo.

SAM

(realizing)

And Jessie? Was he squish... killed, too?

OBSERVER

Ziggy doesn't know.

(checking the computer)

He's having a little trouble getting any data on Jessie. He can't find a birth or death certificate.

SAM

Great. I've replaced a man who didn't exist.

OBSERVER

It's not uncommon for there to be no records on a southern black in the fifties, Sam. Especially in a little burgh like Red Dog.

(looking around)

You know, as I recall, some of the first protests started somewhere around here.

(beat)

This might have been where Autherine Ruth came from.

SAM

Who?

OBSERVER

Autherine Ruth. Young black coed who integrated the University of Alabama.

SAM

How do you know so much about it?

OBSERVER

(matter of fact)

A lot of my friends are black.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED (3)

25

Sam shoots him a look.

SAM

I don't believe you said that.

OBSERVER

(sincerely)

Well, they are.

(beat)

Besides, I was here. I went on
marches, got arrested...beaten. Saw
some good people fall.

(soul-stirring
memory)

Those were powerful days.

SAM

(remembering Miz
Patty's)

Maybe that's why I'm here.

OBSERVER

To get involved in the civil rights
movement? I don't think so, Sam.

SAM

Why not?

Before he can answer, Al is interrupted by the shrill
whistle of a train. He and Sam both turn toward the sound.

26 THEIR POV - THE RAILROAD CROSSING

26

Bees are still humming around the honeysuckle clinging to
the trees overhanging the track. There's another sharp
blast of a whistle and the massive locomotive seems to
explode from the trees and through the crossing.

27 FEATURE SAM

27

As Al turns to him.

OBSERVER

That's why not.

They both look to....

28 MIZ MELNY

28

The afternoon sun burns low behind her as she continues her chat with Charles, oblivious to the freight whizzing past behind her. Then, as suddenly as it came, the train is gone. The bees return to the honeysuckle and over the fading clatter of the wheels we hear....

MIZ MELNY'S VOICE

Now you be careful with those clippings Jessie. Verbina Chilton gave me that piece of jade tree all the way from her sister's in California.

CUT TO

29 INT. MIZ MELNY'S ENTRY - DAY

29

Sam gets through the door behind her laden with packages, closing it with his foot and looks around, trying to orient himself. Miz Melny takes off her hat and places it along with her gloves on the poor boy by the entry.

MIZ MELNY

(continuing)

Although I don't know why anyone would want to go to some place as uncivilized as California.

Sam gets his bundles through the parlor door and comes face to face with a man sitting in a chair by the window. He is Miz Melny's son, Clayton Trafford.

30 NEW ANGLE - FEATURING CLAYTON

30

He is dressed in a seersucker suit with a tie that matches the ice blue of his eyes. Sam stops, uncertain what to do.

CLAYTON

(monotone
greeting)

Jessie.

MIZ MELNY

(entering)

Put that jade in some water 'til it has a chance to root.

(beat)

Clayton, you're early. Supper's not til six.

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED

30

CLAYTON

I came by to have a little talk with
Jessie.

She turns and looks to Sam who hasn't moved.

MIZ MELNY

Not until he puts that jade in some
water.

(beat)

What in heaven's name do you want to
talk to Jessie about?

CLAYTON

Nothin' that you need fret about,
Mama.

She eyes Clayton suspiciously, pissed that she's being
dismissed. Clayton shoots Sam a look.

CLAYTON

We'll just talk in the kitchen.

Sam's expression is one of uncertainty as he exits the
room, following Clayton.

31 INT. MIZ MELNY'S KITCHEN - DAY

31

Sam sets the groceries on the counter and sticks the jade
tree into a glass of water. Clayton stands by the door,
watching for a moment before speaking.

CLAYTON

I guess you realize you stirred up
damn near the whole town with that
little bit of business you pulled
today.

SAM

Business?

CLAYTON

(patronizing)

Now, don't play dumb with me,
Jessie.

(pointed)

I'm talkin' about you sittin' down
at Miz Patty's today.

Sam studies the man for a beat.

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED

31

SAM

It's a lunch counter, I was hungry,
so I decided to get some lunch.

CLAYTON

Lunch?

(smiling)

Jessie, you ain't never been a
trouble maker. Why the hell would
you do somethin' that stupid?

(beat)

You got one of them uppity northern
niggers staying with you?

Sam stiffens, choosing his words very carefully.

SAM

No...I don't believe I do.

CLAYTON

Well, then I don't know how to
figure this out.

(beat)

I know you can't read. And you say
you ain't got Northern niggers
visitin'. How else would you get
such a stupid notion in your head?

SAM

(very even)

Like I said, I was hungry.

Clayton crosses towards him, trying to intimidate him. Sam
is getting pissed.

CLAYTON

Take my advice boy, don't get that
hungry.

32 CLOSE ON BOTH MEN

32

Sam stares hard at Clayton, intimidating him with a look
he's not used to seeing. Shaken, Clayton slowly retreats
into the Parlor. We hold on Sam's angry look as we....

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

33 INT. MIZ MELNY'S PARLOR - DAY

33

Miz Melny is sitting in a white wicker rocker near the lace curtains that hang by the front window. She never turns as Clayton enters the room.

MIZ MELNY

Clayton, when you come back for supper, bring some buttermilk from Mister Sumter's.

CLAYTON

Mama, we need to have a talk.

MIZ MELNY

Whatever Jessie did at Miz Patty's, it don't make the least bit of never mind to me.

CLAYTON

You got ears like a hawk.

MIZ MELNY

I'm old, not dead.

CLAYTON

Mama, you're the widow of the Governor of this state and when your negro starts acting uppity, people take notice.

MIZ MELNY

Clayton Sherman Trafford...I don't need you to lecture me. I know who I was married to and I know the responsibilities that go with it.

Clayton knows it's useless to argue. Slowly he puts on his hat and heads for the door.

CLAYTON

Alright, Mama. But if Jessie steps out of bounds again, are you gonna be responsible?

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED

33

MIZ MELNY
Don't forget the buttermilk.

He goes through the screen door and she closes her eyes, the anger welling up inside of her. Miz Melny stands, her breathing quickening.

MIZ MELNY
(calling weakly)
Jessie!

34 WIDER ANGLE - INCLUDING SAM

34

He stands for a beat in the doorway; seeing she is in trouble, he rushes to her.

35 FEATURING MIZ MELNY

35

She stands silent, her eyes glazing over as if she were going to faint. Sam goes to help her, getting her back to her chair.

SAM
Are you all right?
(beat)
Sit down.

She takes his arm and eases into the rocker.

MIZ MELNY
(weakly)
I'm fine, Jessie. It's just that Clayton gets so riled, bothering with things that aren't his concern.
(holding her head)
Makes my head swell.

Sam instinctively checks her eyes.

SAM
Are you feeling a little dizzy?

She brushes him away, pulling at her ears.

MIZ MELNY
(angry)
Yes...
(realizing)
What are you doing?

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED

35

SAM

I'm checking to see if you're okay.

MIZ MELNY

Since when did you get a medical degree?

SAM

I've done some...doctoring in my time.

MIZ MELNY

Well, I'll thank you to please keep your colored voodoo to yourself.

(beat)

Now, if you'd be so kind as to go fetch me a glass of lemonade, I'll be just fine.

Sam watches a moment then crosses to the kitchen.

36 INT. KITCHEN - ON SAM

36

He goes to the icebox and pours a glass of lemonade. There is a knock at the back door. Sam hesitates a moment, then opens it.

37 NEW ANGLE - INCLUDING BACK DOOR

37

On the other side stands a young black woman of about seventeen in a simple cotton dress. Her name is Nell.

SAM

Yes?

Nell stares at him for a moment.

NELL

Is Miz Melny gonna keep you late tonight?

SAM

Uh...I'm not sure.

NELL

You want me to wait or come back later?

Sam stares at the black girl before him. Nell looks a bit concerned.

CONTINUED

37 CONTINUED

37

NELL
(continuing)
You okay, Papa Jessie?

MIZ MELNY'S VOICE
(calling from the
parlor)
Where's my lemonade, Jessie?

NELL
I swear that old woman's 'bout to
run you ragged.

SAM
(slowly)
I'll just take this to her and find
out when I can go.

Sam turns, glancing back to a confused face by the door.

38 INT. PARLOR - FEATURING MIZ MELNY

38

She sits, fanning herself by the window as Sam crosses,
setting the glass next to her on a small fine wood table.

MIZ MELNY
Was that your Nell comin' to fetch
you home Jessie?

SAM
I believe so.

MIZ MELNY
Oh, I meant to get you on that leaky
faucet. Drives me crazy all night.
(sweetly)
I suppose I can live with it till
you get back.
(beat)
But you get on it first thing. You
hear me?

Sam smiles at her.

SAM
I'll do that.
(concerned)
You sure you're okay? I mean, I
just don't like leaving you alone.

She waves him off.

CONTINUED

38 CONTINUED

38

MIZ MELNY

Will you stop fretting about me.

(beat)

Besides, Clayton will be back for
supper.

(beat)

Good night, Jessie.

Sam smiles at her and heads back out into the kitchen.

SAM

Good night, Miz Melny.

CUT TO

39 EXT. RIVER ROAD - DAY

39

A black Plymouth from the early fifties or late forties
appears on the dirt road. Billy Holiday cries her version
of "God Bless the Child" on the radio.

40 INT. THE PLYMOUTH - DAY

40

Nell drives, occasionally glancing at Sam who watches out
the window. They sit in silence for a long time.
Finally....

NELL

Well?

Sam isn't sure what to say.

SAM

Well?

NELL

Come on, Papa Jessie, all the white
folks at the market were blabbin'
their lips off about you in Miz
Patty's luncheonette today.

SAM

Certainly is the talk of the town.

NELL

So...what happened?

SAM

I was hungry.

CONTINUED

40 CONTINUED

40

NELL

Hungry!

(laughing)

That's the one place in town that
doesn't even have a colored section.

(with pride)

You know what, Papa Jessie? I think
you sittin' at that counter was a
good idea. It's about time somebody
shook up the white folks in this
stupid town.

(beat)

Remind them what century we're
livin' in.

She gives Sam a warm smile that relaxes all the
tension Clayton and Miz Melny put him under.

41 EXT. RIVER ROAD - DAY - TRACKING THE PLYMOUTH

41

It passes a crossroad where a pickup truck is waiting and
then slows for a sharp, hairpin turn.

42 INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

42

Billy Joe and Toad watch the Plymouth disappear around the
sharp turn and then pull out after it.

43 INT. PLYMOUTH - DAY

43

As they clear the sharp turn, Nell picks up speed a little.

NELL

See, you don't even have to tell me
to slow down anymore.

(beat)

'Course, Daddy'd have a fit if he
knew I was goin' over thirty-five.
But Sissy made me swear I'd get you
home early enough so she can help
you cook.

A sick smile crosses Sam's face.

SAM

Cook?

(beat)

Cook what?

CONTINUED

43 CONTINUED

43

NELL

Papa Jessie, are you goin' senile on me? You know you promised to cook chitlin's for the church picnic.

Sam nods with a slight smile as if just recalling.

SAM'S VOICE

I'd heard of Chitlin's, of course. Thought they were one of those Southern delicacies that tastes as good as it sounds.

SMASH CUT TO

44 INT. TYLER KITCHEN - NIGHT - CLOSE ON WASHBASINS

44

Camera is looking down into a large basin filled with uncooked pig intestines. Next to it is another basin with collard greens.

SAM

I never realized they were pig intestines.

45 WIDER ANGLE - FEATURING SAM

45

He stands, looking down into the basin, nauseous at what he beholds. He tries to smile.

SAM'S VOICE OVER

The smell was like something that had been kept around too long in an autopsy class.

Next to him is Jessie's ten-year old granddaughter, Sissy, his son, Willis and daughter-in-law, Effie. Willis wears the simple black suit of a preacher.

Effie, pretty in a simple sort of way, holds her nose as Sissy ties her long black pigtails back and sticks both hands into the mess.

SISSY

I already cleaned them three times, Papa Jessie. You think that's enough?

Sam's knees wobble and he sits in an old wooden chair.

CONTINUED

45 CONTINUED

45

SAM

Oh....I dunno.

EFFIE

I don't care how many times you
clean them, you'd have to certify me
crazy 'fore I'd eat chitlin's.
(apologizing)
No offense, Papa Jessie.

SAM

(weak smile)

I may have lost the taste for them
myself.

WILLIS

(concerned)

You okay, Papa Jessie? You're
lookin' a little pale.

OBSERVER'S VOICE

(thrilled)

Chitlin's! And collard greens!

Sam jumps, startled.

46 WIDER ANGLE - INCLUDING AL

46

His head is sticking out of the wall, looking down into the
basins.

EFFIE

And jumpy.

SAM

(recovering)

Oh, I'm just a little...tired.

OBSERVER

(emerging from the
wall)

And Sam, there's fresh cornbread in
the kitchen!

SISSY

I'm not tired a lick.

EFFIE

(to Nell)

Well, tired or not, it's past your
bedtime.

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED

46

SISSY

Aw, Mama, you promised I could help
Papa Jessie cook.

SAM

(hopeful)

I could use the help.

EFFIE

You were supposed to be home at six,
Jessie Tyler. It's past eight and
you're on your own.

She hustles Sissy into the house.

OBSERVER

Not to worry. I have a killer
recipe for chitlin's.

SAM

It'll kill me.

WILLIS

You shouldn'ta volunteered if you
didn't want to do it, Papa Jessie.

47 CLOSE ON SAM AND AL

47

Willis closes the screen door, leaving Sam alone on the
porch with Al.

OBSERVER

This is when I hate being a
hologram. The smell of the
chitlin's and greens cookin' is a
religious experience.

On Sam's reaction, we....

DISSOLVE TO

48 INT. TYLER KITCHEN - LATER

48

Sam stands over a huge black cauldron, stirring. He turns
his head away so he doesn't have to smell the rising steam.

SAM

I feel like the wicked witch of the
west.

CONTINUED

48 CONTINUED

48

OBSERVER

(lost in thought)

Garlic, lemon, pepper, cloves,
allspice, marjoram, vinegar...

(ponders)

Damn, what the hell am I forgetting?

SAM

How sick this is making me.

OBSERVER

Hey, show a little gratitude here.
I'm busting my brains out trying to
remember this recipe and I don't
even get to taste it.

SAM

Trust me, you can taste it all you
want.

OBSERVER

That's it, just taste a little of
the stock and tell me what's
missing.

SAM

Are you crazy!

WILLIS'S VOICE

Not as crazy as you.

49 NEW ANGLE - INCLUDING WILLIS

49

He's in his robe, standing by the door.

WILLIS

(continuing)

Or at least that's what people are
gonna say when they see you talkin'
to yourself.

SAM

Helps me think while I'm cooking.
(small smile)
Like Effie said, you've got to be a
little crazy to eat chitlin's
anyway.

WILLIS

(knowingly)

Maybe bein' crazy is what happened
to you today at Miz Patty's?

CONTINUED

OBSERVER

What happened?

SAM

Nothing happened. Nothing at all.

WILLIS

Nothin'! Nell says you walked right into Miz Patty's and sat down at her lily white counter just as bold as you please.

OBSERVER

Aw, Sam, you didn't?

SAM

(to Willis)

Well, yes, I guess I did.

OBSERVER

Sam, we've got to have a serious talk.

WILLIS

(uneasy)

Papa Jessie, don't give white trash an excuse to start trouble.

(beat)

I want Nell and Sissy to have you around for a long time.

Taking a spoon, Willis tastes the stock.

WILLIS

Needs a little more salt.

(beat)

'Night Daddy.

He exits, leaving Al staring sternly at Sam.

SAM

(sheepishly)

Needs a little more salt.

OBSERVER

(concerned)

Sam, you promised you would lay low, save Miz Melny and leap out of here.

SAM

I didn't know I was black. And even if I did, I had a right to sit at that lunch counter.

CONTINUED

49 CONTINUED (2)

49

OBSERVER

Not in nineteen fifty-five, you didn't.

SAM

Well, I should have. Maybe that's why I'm here.

OBSERVER

(adamant)

No, Sam. No.

(checking his
computer)

Ziggy's got this Miz Melny train wreck computed out to a ninety-two point six percent certainty. You're here to save her, not to initiate Civil rights activity in the South.

SAM

Maybe I'm here to do both.

OBSERVER

Sam, you aren't a black man.

SAM

What difference does it make? Who ever sent me here, sent me to act like myself.

OBSERVER

You're out of your league, my friend.

SAM

I sat down at that lunch counter because I was hungry and everybody went nuts because they saw me as a black man instead of a hungry man. That's wrong. And I....

There's a scream from the front porch. Sam and Al exchange a look as they race out of the kitchen.

CUT TO

50 EXT. TYLER PORCH - NIGHT

50

Nell is standing, frozen on the porch, washed in the red glow of a huge fire as Sam rushes through the door with Al.

51 ON A BURNING CROSS 51

Burning furiously in the middle of the front lawn. On the dirt road, Billy Joe's pickup vanishes into the dark.

52 ANGLE ON THE PORCH 52

As the others emerge from the house, Sam takes Sissy into his arms and turns her frightened face away. Willis and Effie cling to each other, afraid. Nell looks angry and defiant.

53 MOVING IN ON SAM 53

Holding Sissy in his arms, his face filled with anger.

DISSOLVE TO

54 EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY - ESTABLISHING 54

Typical small Southern jail and police office.

SAM'S VOICE

What do you mean, there's no need to do anything!

SHERIFF BLOUNT'S VOICE

Just that.

55 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY 55

Blount sits at his desk with his hands folded in his lap, the same way he sat at Miz Patty's watching Sam earlier. A flustered Sam paces before him.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

So why don't you just go on back home, clean up your yard and forget about it.

SAM

I can identify them. It was those two called Toad and Billy Joe.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Them boys were just bein' mischievous.

CONTINUED

55 CONTINUED

55

SAM

I don't call burnin' a cross on
somebody's front lawn mischievous,
Sheriff.

Sheriff gives Sam a cold hard look.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

You should have thought about that
before you sat your colored butt
down over at Miz Patty's.

(pointed)

Now, you push this any further, I'm
throwin' your ass in jail.

Sam looks at him in disbelief.

SAM

And what about Billy Joe and Toad?

SHERIFF BLOUNT

(after a beat)

Just leave my boy to me. I'll have
a talk with him and Toad.

Sam's blood runs cold as he realizes what he's up against.
He turns and reaches for the door.

SAM

It doesn't end with this, Sheriff.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Well, now that's up to you, Jessie.

Sam holds his eyes for a moment, then leaves.

56 EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

56

Sam exits, looking like he wants to hit something. He
looks around the small Southern town square.

57 SAM'S POV - CONFEDERATE FLAG

57

Flying over the courthouse.

58 BACK ON SAM

58

Frustrated, he wipes the sweat from his face, his mouth

CONTINUED

58 CONTINUED

58

parched from emotion he has swallowed. He notices a small wall fountain and bends to get a drink. As he does, he reveals a faded....

59 "WHITES ONLY" SIGN

59

above the fountain. Sam didn't even notice it, but...

60 ON BILLY JOE AND TOAD

60

Walking out of the local bar, they stare across the square at Sam in disbelief.

61 WIDE ON SAM

61

He finishes his drink and crosses to the Plymouth as we....

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

62 EXT. MIZ MELNY'S HOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING 62

It's a hot day with hardly a breeze to move the elm trees.

MIZ MELNY'S VOICE

I don't have a drop of water in my kitchen. I can't cook. I can't wash.

63 INT. MIZ MELNY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CLOSE ON SAM 63

He's under a leaking sink, fighting a spray of water, as he tries to tape a broken pipe. Miz Melny's feet can be seen beyond him.

SAM

The pipe's broken.

MIZ MELNY

I know the pipe's broken.

Sam shuts off the water valve and crawls out.

64 ANOTHER ANGLE 64

As Sam stands, she hands him a rag to dry off.

SAM

I'll have to get a replacement.

MIZ MELNY

Well, I suppose it can wait 'til after tea.

She points to two cups of tea and plates of cookies on the counter. Sam looks sweetly surprised. He picks up the tea and plate and follows her into the dining room.

65 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY - FEATURING MIZ MELNY 65

She sets her tea and cookies down on the table and looks up in surprise as Sam does the same.

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED

65

MIZ MELNY

Jessie Tyler, what in heaven's name
are you doin'?

SAM

(confused)

Ah...you made tea for us and I
thought I'd join you.

MIZ MELNY

Jessie, somebody's lowered the wick
in your brain. I make tea for you
every afternoon and you....

(pointing)

...have it right there in the
kitchen.

Sam stares at her.

MIZ MELNY

Don't give me that dumb look...git!

SAM

Miz Melny, you were kind enough to
make me this and it only seemed like
good manners to sit with you and
share your company.

MIZ MELNY

(shocked)

I...I can't have tea with you,
Jessie.

SAM

Why not?

MIZ MELNY

No why to it. It's just not done.

(beat)

Coloreds and whites don't eat at the
same table.

SAM

If you want to eat with me, who says
you can't?

MIZ MELNY

I say I can't.

SAM

Why?

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED (2)

65

MIZ MELNY

(flustered)

It's just the way things are. The
way things have always been.

SAM

Maybe it's time they changed.

Miz Melny stares at him like he's nuts. There is a knock
at the door. For a moment, neither seems to hear it.

MIZ MELNY

(nervous)

Answer the door, Jessie.

SAM

(after a beat)

Yez-mmm.

He exits and she looks at her food with no appetite.

66 INT. KITCHEN DOOR - ON NELL

66

She peeks in through the screen, waiting for Sam to open
it.

SAM

I'm sorry. I forgot to tell you I'm
gonna drive Miz Melny's car home
tonight.

NELL

(shocked)

She's gonna let you drive that ol'
Buick to our place?

SAM

I gotta work on the engine.

NELL

(suspicious)

Papa Jessie, whatta you up to?

SAM

Nuthin'.

(changing subject)

Now, you go on. I'll see you at
supper.

NELL

Just as well, I'm late for choir
practice as it is.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED

66

She hurries off the porch. Sam takes a deep breath and walks back to the dining room.

67 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

67

Miz Melny hasn't touched a bit of her tea. Sam enters and stands in front of his cup. For a moment, neither one speaks, then she looks up to him and utters a firm....

MIZ MELNY

Hogwash!

SAM

Beg pardon?

MIZ MELNY

What you're talkin' is hogwash.
Ain't nobody gonna change the way
things are.

SAM

But they will. Blacks are going to
unite and....

MIZ MELNY

Blacks?

SAM

Blacks. That's what they'll be....
(catching)
...that's what we'll be called,
instead of Negroes.

MIZ MELNY

And what in God's name is wrong with
bein' called a 'Negro'?

SAM

Maybe it's just too close to nigger.

MIZ MELNY

(stiffens)

I've never used that word, Jessie.
Not to your face or behind your
back.

(upset)

When you sat at Miz Patty's lunch
counter, I figured it was 'cause you
were gettin' old and somehow it
slipped your mind. Now, I think
you've just gone plum crazy.

CONTINUED

67 CONTINUED

67

SAM
I've gone crazy?
(softly)
Miz Melny, I'm not burning crosses
in front of anybody's home.

Over Miz Melny's look...

BILLY JOE'S VOICE
It don't make sense.

CUT TO

68 INT. BILLY JOE'S PICKUP - DAY

68

Parked in the trees near the crossroads, Billy Joe and Toad
are drinking beer and watching the river road.

BILLY JOE
(continuing)
First, he sits at Miz Patty's lunch
counter. Then, he drinks from a
white fountain.

TOAD
Maybe it's television.

BILLY JOE
Whatta you mean?

TOAD
Some of 'em down in the hollow been
gettin' television sets. I think
they see niggers on TV behaving like
white folks and it gives 'em ideas.

BILLY JOE
I never seen no nigger on TV...
'cept the fights.

TOAD
I did. Last night on 'The
Millionaire' there was this janitor.
Got a whole bunch of money.

BILLY JOE
How much?

CONTINUED

68 CONTINUED

68

TOAD
(after a beat)
I dunno. But he bought himself a
new Cadillac, a big ol' house with a
swimmin' pool and....
(pointing o.s.)
Hey! Here they come.

69 TOAD'S POV - THE RIVER ROAD

69

The Plymouth is kicking a cloud of dust as it speeds toward
the crossroads.

70 INT. PLYMOUTH - DAY

70

Nell is singing a Gospel number at the top of her lungs as
she drives.

71 INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

71

Billy Joe starts the engine and revs it a couple of times.

TOAD
(touch nervous)
I ain't killin' him.
(beat)
Nevil Pressy had to move to Georgia
cause a tryin' to teach that
Blouchette boy a lesson.

BILLY JOE
We ain't gonna kill him. Just whack
him back into place.

72 EXT. RIVER ROAD - DAY

72

As the Plymouth approaches the crossroads, the pickup pulls
out in front of it.

73 INT. PLYMOUTH - DAY - CLOSE ON NELL

73

She screams, jerking the wheel over hard to avoid a
collision. Not used to the speed, she loses control and
the car skids for the edge.

74 ON THE PLYMOUTH

74

It leaves the road, rolling over and over until it crashes into the pussy willows and reeds lining the river.

75 ON THE PICKUP

75

Screeching to a stop on the road above.

76 INT. THE PICKUP

76

The two boys are stunned by the quickness of the accident.

TOAD

What the hell happened?

BILLY JOE

Damn niggers can't drive no better than a mule.

TOAD

(getting out)

We better see how bad they're hurt.

BILLY JOE

(pulling him back)

You crazy! We're getting the hell outta here.

77 ANGLE ON THE PICKUP

77

Toad slams the door as Billy Joe spins out and away, leaving only a slowly settling cloud of dust.

78 INT. PLYMOUTH - DAY - ON NELL

78

She has been thrown to the passenger side of the car. Her head is split open and she is bleeding. There's a lucid moment of consciousness as she moans, then blacks out.

SAM'S VOICE

(a plea)

The change can be bloody or peaceful....

CUT TO

79 INT. MIZ MELNY'S DINING ROOM - DAY

79

Sam is still standing in front of his plate. Neither of them has touched the food.

SAM

...and you could make the difference
around here. People respect you.
If you change, so might some of
them.

Miz Melny stares at Sam for a long time. It's hard to tell what she's thinking. Finally, she looks down at her cup.

MIZ MELNY

My tea's cold.

(beat)

You gonna fix that leak or not?

Sam sighs, resigned.

SAM

I'll have to go to town for pipe.

MIZ MELNY

I'll get my hat.

SAM

(edgy)

No need for you to go out in that
heat.

MIZ MELNY

I ain't gonna melt. Besides, I need
to stop at Pratt's Pharmacy
for...some things.

SAM

I'll get 'em.

MIZ MELNY

(pointed)

They're personal.

SAM

Ah...Miz Melny...maybe I can fix
that leak without a new pipe.

MIZ MELNY

Fine.

(picking up the
keys)

I can drive myself.

CONTINUED

79 CONTINUED

79

SAM
(grabbing the
keys)

No!

She steps back, surprised at his aggressiveness.

SAM
(hesitant)
If you're that set on goin' I'll
drive you.

Sam takes his cup and plate into the kitchen and we hold on
Miz Melny's reaction before we....

CUT TO

80 EXT. RIVER ROAD - DAY

80

The Buick moves sedately along the dusty road, barely
kicking up any dust.

SAM'S VOICE
I had a knot in my stomach the size
of Ziggy's control mouse.

81 INT. BUICK - DAY - FEATURING SAM

81

They each sit in their own silence.

SAM'S VOICE
Even though we were driving away
from the tracks, away from the
train, and away from Miz Melny's
fate...it wouldn't go away.

Sam hears a little gasp and glances up to Miz Melny's
reflection in the rearview mirror.

82 SAM'S POV - MIZ MELNY

82

She's leaning forward, peering out her window at something.

MIZ MELNY
Oh, my Lord! Isn't that your
Willis's car?

83 EXT. ACROSS THE OVERTURNED PLYMOUTH - DAY

83

On the river road above it, Sam pulls the Buick to a stop and leaps out. He scrambles down the bank to the Plymouth as Miz Melny gets out and nervously peers after him.

84 INT. PLYMOUTH - DAY

84

Nell, bloody and unconscious, still lies on the passenger side of the car. Sam crawls in and checks her pulse and eyes. He grabs her scarf and wraps it around her head wound.

85 EXT. RIVER ROAD - DAY - ACROSS MIZ MELNY

85

as she nervously watches Sam carry Nell up the bank toward her.

MIZ MELNY

Will she be all right?

SAM

We've got to get her to a hospital.

Miz Melny helps him as best she can to get Nell into the back seat. She cradles the girl's bloody head in her lap as Sam jumps behind the wheel.

86 EXT. ON THE BUICK - DAY

86

Sam spins the tires in the dirt as he fishtails away.

87 INT. BUICK - DAY

87

Miz Melny softly strokes Nell's face.

MIZ MELNY

You're gonna be fine, child. Just fine.

Sam swerves around a curve and onto another dirt road. Miz Melny looks up and is confused.

MIZ MELNY

Where you goin' Jessie?

SAM

The hospital's the other side of the cemetery.

CONTINUED

87 CONTINUED

87

MIZ MELNY

That's a white hospital. Colored
hospital's in Vida.

SAM

Which is closest?

MIZ MELNY

Tallageda. But they won't take her,
Jessie.

SAM

The hell they won't.

88 EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - DAY

88

It looks peaceful and quiet as the Buick approaches.

89 INT. BUICK - DAY - CLOSE ON SAM

89

He slows and leans out the window, listening and looking
for any sign of the train. With his heart pounding, he
accelerates for the crossing.

90 EXT. ON THE CROSSING - DAY

90

The Buick bumps over the tracks and past the cemetery.

91 INT. BUICK - DAY

91

Sam lets out a sigh of relief and accelerates away.

92 EXT. TALLADEGA HOSPITAL - DAY

92

The Buick pulls into emergency entrance and Sam leaps out.
He lifts Nell out of the back and races into the emergency
entrance with Miz Melny following.

93 INT. EMERGENCY CORRIDOR - DAY

93

Sam lays Nell on a gurney as a doctor and a couple of
nurses rush up. They all freeze. Sam, checking Nell's
pulse, turns to the doctor.

SAM

Her pulse rate's dropping. Shock.
Possibly a severed temporal artery.

CONTINUED

93 CONTINUED

93

Sam notices them staring at him.

DOCTOR
(uncomfortably)
We don't accept colored here.
(beat)
I'm sorry, but those are the rules.

Sam is into the doctor's face, backing him up.

SAM
Get her on an I.V. Plasma until you
can do a type and cross-match.
(hard)
Do it now.

94 ON NURSE ETHEL

94

An older, heavy woman who picks up the phone and dials.

NURSE ETHEL
(whispers into the
phone)
Get me the sheriff.

95 BACK ON SAM AND THE OTHERS

95

He looks like he's about to take the doctor apart when Miz Melny steps forward.

MIZ MELNY
Aren't you Dehlia Parker's boy?

DOCTOR
Yes, Ma'am.

MIZ MELNY
Then you know exactly who I am.

DOCTOR
Yes, Miz Trafford

MIZ MELNY
Well, I want you to help that child.

The doctor is stunned. He can't believe what she's saying.
When he realizes Miz Melny means it, he turns to a nurse.

DOCTOR
Get an I.V. and cross-match
started.

CONTINUED

95 CONTINUED

95

A nurse throws a blood pressure cuff on as the Doctor leans in to examine Nell's eyes.

SAM

I think her temporal artery may be severed.

DOCTOR

What's her blood pressure?

NURSE

Eighty-five over sixty and dropping.

DOCTOR

Let's get her into the operating room.

They rush away with the gurney and through the doors at the end of the hall.

96 ON SAM AND MIZ MELNY

96

For a moment they just stand there staring at the closed doors, then he turns to her.

SAM

Thank you.

She gives him the flicker of a smile and pats his arm.

97 ON NURSE ETHEL

97

She looks at them both with disgust.

98 EXT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - DAY

98

Sam steps out and takes a deep breath of fresh air.

OBSERVER'S VOICE

Well done, Sam.

He turns and we adjust to reveal....

99 THE OBSERVER

99

standing beside him, looking edgy.

CONTINUED

99 CONTINUED

99

SAM

Tell that to Miz Melny. She's the one who got the bigoted idiot to do something.

OBSERVER

Sam, why don't you get Miz Melny and drive away from here.

SAM

Why?

OBSERVER

(checking his
watch)

Because in twenty-three minutes she's going to get hit by that freight.

SAM

So I should put her in a car and start driving?

OBSERVER

(indicating)

The crossing's that way. Go....

(indicating the
opposite way)

...that way.

SAM

Al, you're getting paranoid.

OBSERVER

That's how I lived this long.

(beat)

I'm telling you, pal, I got a bad feeling.

Over this, they hear the sound of a siren and both turn.

100 ON THE SHERIFF'S CAR

100

As it pulls up to the hospital and Sheriff Blount gets out.

OBSERVER

(agitated)

I knew it. Damn it, I knew it!

Behind them, Nurse Ethel hurries out of the emergency entrance.

CONTINUED

100 CONTINUED

100

NURSE ETHEL
He's the one, Sheriff.

SHERIFF BLOUNT
(sadly)
Aw, Jessie. I warned you not to make
trouble.

SAM
All I did was bring a girl here that
needed medical treatment.

NURSE ETHEL
A negro girl.

SHERIFF BLOUNT
That's breaking the segregation
laws, Jessie. You know that.

SAM
What was I supposed to do, Sheriff?
Let her bleed to death?

SHERIFF BLOUNT
(after a beat)
No. I reckon not.

Sam sighs in relief and Sheriff Blount takes advantage of
it to slip a pair of handcuffs on him.

SAM
(struggling)
What are you doing?

SHERIFF BLOUNT
You did what you had to do. I gotta
do the same.

101 CLOSE ON SAM AND THE SHERIFF

101

He tries to shove Sam toward his police car, but can't.

OBSERVER
Sam, you gotta get out of this!

SAM
I'm trying!

NURSE ETHEL
He's crazy as a loon, Sheriff.
Talks to himself. I've been
watching him.

CONTINUED

101 CONTINUED

101

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Damn it, Jessie, ease up or I'll
pistol whip yah!

SAM

(still resisting)
Okay. Okay. On one condition.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

What?

SAM

You don't let Miz Melny leave here,
even if she wants to, for....

OBSERVER

(checking his
computer)
Twenty minutes'll do it.

SAM

...a half hour.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Why?

SAM

Does it matter?

Sheriff Blount studies him for a moment, then turns to
Nurse Ethel.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

You got that, Ethel?

NURSE ETHEL

Yes, suh.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

(to Sam)
Okay?

Sam relaxes and the Sheriff pushes him into the back of the
car.

102 ANOTHER ANGLE

102

The Sheriff slams the door and gets behind the wheel. As
he pulls out, Sam manages one small smile to Al.

103 ON AL AND NURSE ETHEL

103

She is smiling smugly as she watches the police car drive off. Al gives her a kick in the ass that goes right through her. Behind them, Miz Melny comes out smiling.

MIZ MELNY

Jessie, Nell's gonna be just fine!

OBSERVER

Thank, God.

She stops and looks around.

MIZ MELNY

(to Nurse Ethel)

Where's my driver?

NURSE ETHEL

Sheriff arrested him.

OBSERVER

Pig butt here turned him in.

MIZ MELNY

Arrested him? For what?

NURSE ETHEL

Bringing that negro here.

MIZ MELNY

(angry)

Then, he'll have to arrest me.

OBSERVER

Atta girl!

104 ANOTHER ANGLE

104

Miz Melny heads for her car as Al's eyes widen in horror.

OBSERVER

Oh, No! I take it back.

(beat)

You can't do that!

NURSE ETHEL

Miz Trafford, Sheriff Blount said
you was to wait here for one
half-hour.

CONTINUED

104 CONTINUED

104

MIZ MELNY
He did, did he.
(getting behind
the wheel)
Then he's goin' to be in for a
surprise.

105 FEATURE AL

105

He closes his eyes in a prayer.

OBSERVER
Please, Sam. Have the keys in your
pocket.

The engine starts. As he watches in horror, Miz Melny
pulls out.

106 ON THE BUICK

106

As she turns it around to head back for town and the
railroad crossing, we....

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

107 EXT. TALLEDEGA HOSPITAL - DAY - ON THE OBSERVER 107

As Miz Melny jerks the big Buick around in front of the emergency entrance.

OBSERVER

(shouting)

Gooshie! Have Ziggy center me on Miz Melny!

The Buick passes him and drives away. Al starts to run after it.

OBSERVER

(shouting)

Damn it, Gooshie, do it!

Even moving slowly, the Buick is pulling away. Then suddenly, Al vanishes.

108 INT. BUICK - DAY 108

Muttering to herself, Miz Melny has both gloved hands tightly on the steering wheel. It's obvious from the way she jerked the gears, that she hasn't driven for a while.

MIZ MELNY

Never heard of anythin' so almighty foolish in my life...arrestin' Jessie for carin' for his own.

(sighs)

I wish you were here, Charles. You always did know what to do.

OBSERVER'S VOICE

(gently)

So do I....

109 ANOTHER ANGLE 109

The Observer is sitting in the car beside her.

CONTINUED

OBSERVER

...and what you've got to do Miz Melny, is stop this car.

MIZ MELNY

Am I in the right gear, Charles?

(peers at the
shift)

It's been so long....

OBSERVER

Reverse. It'd be better if you were in reverse.

MIZ MELNY

(back to driving)

Oh, well, what difference does it make. Long as we get there.

OBSERVER

But you're not going to get there!

MIZ MELNY

(smiles)

Remember what you always said, Charles? Better late....

MIZ MELNY/OBSERVER

...than never.

OBSERVER

It's going to be never, Miz Melny unless you stop this car!

(to himself)

Why am I talking to somebody who can't hear me?

There is the distant sound of a train whistle. Al pales.

MIZ MELNY

If I jus' wasn't so nervous. I hate when I get nervous.

(pulls her ears)

And there's that silly ringin', again.

OBSERVER

It's not ringing. It's a whistle. A train whistle!

MIZ MELNY

I feel like someone's gone and stuffed cotton blossoms in my ears.

CONTINUED

109 CONTINUED (2)

109

The train whistle sounds again. This time, dangerously closer.

110 EXT. FREIGHT TRAIN - DAY - STOCK

110

It speeds across field after field of summer cotton.

111 INT. MIZ MELNY'S BUICK - DAY

111

Al is peering ahead, looking for the crossing as his mind desperately searches for a way to stop her.

MIZ MELNY

I suppose I should visit Doctor Clifford. But I never did care for his bedside manner....

OBSERVER

(forceful)

Miz Melny, I'm ordering you to stop!

MIZ MELNY

...even if he was a friend of yours, Charles.

Al throws up his hands in frustration.

112 EXT. FREIGHT TRAIN - DAY - STOCK

112

Roaring past camera. Whistle blaring. The clack of the wheels against the track.

113 INT. MIZ MELNY'S BUICK - DAY

113

Even inside the car, the oncoming whistle is loud.

OBSERVER

You've gotta have heard that!

She pulls at her ears, but keeps on driving.

114 EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - DAY

114

A few hundred yards up the road, the Buick drives toward us. A flock of birds flushes from the rumble of the approaching train.

115 INT. MIZ MELNY'S BUICK - DAY

115

Al is frantic. He can see the train through the trees and realizes her death is only moments away. Then he sees the cemetery.

OBSERVER

(pointing)

The cemetery! Miz Melny, turn into the cemetery.

She looks back down at the gear shift.

MIZ MELNY

I know it's in the wrong gear.

OBSERVER

(gesturing)

Charles! Go visit your Charles!

MIZ MELNY

I went from first to second...but did I put it in third?

116 EXT. ON THE CROSSING - DAY

116

The Buick is less than a hundred feet from the tracks and the inevitable collision.

117 INT. MIZ MELNY'S BUICK - DAY

117

Al gives it one last desperate attempt.

OBSERVER

Miz Melny, turn into the God damn cemetery!

Startled, she does.

118 EXT. ON THE SCENE - DAY

118

The Buick jerks through the gate and a beat later, the train roars through the crossing.

119 INT. MIZ MELNY'S BUICK - DAY

119

Watching the boxcars whiz by, Miz Melny realizes how close she came to death. She takes a deep breath and composes herself, then....

CONTINUED

119 CONTINUED

119

MIZ MELNY

(softly)

Thank you, Charles.

(firm)

But you didn't have to swear.

On Al's slightly hysterical laugh, we...

DISSOLVE TO

120 INT. COURTHOUSE JAIL CELL - DAY

120

Sam's sitting on a hard bunk, his back to the wall, as Al gesticulates excitedly in front of him.

OBSERVER

It was incredible! Real Twilight Zone stuff. Sam, she had to have heard me!

SAM

That's great, Al.

OBSERVER

Think of the possibilities. If I reached Miz Melny, maybe...just maybe I can reach other women....

(beat)

...younger women.

Sam shakes his head.

OBSERVER

What?

SAM

Is sex all you think about?

OBSERVER

(mulls it over)

Except for pulling your butt outta the fire...yeah.

SAM

(smiles)

You got me there, Al.

OBSERVER

That's what I figured.

(remembering)

Oh, hey...Ziggy finally ran down some data on Jessie.

CONTINUED

120 CONTINUED

120

SAM

What happened to him?

OBSERVER

Nothing. He's still alive in our time. He's gotta be over a hundred and five. Ain't that a kick in the butt!

SAM

That's great!

(realizing)

Then why am I here? Miz Melny's alive. He's alive. Why haven't I leaped?

They hear the door to the cell area opening.

OBSERVER

Maybe we're about to find out.

121 ANOTHER ANGLE

121

Sheriff Blount walks past the empty cells to Sam's and unlocks the door.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Miz Melny's persuaded me to forget about this charge against you.

Sam slowly rises and picks up his jacket.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Jessie...I spoke to the hospital this morning.

SAM

How's Nell?

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Fine. They said she's doin' just fine.

(hesitant)

She told them how the accident happened. It seems...a couple of boys sorta...ran her off the road.

(quickly)

They didn't mean to hurt her.

SAM

What did they mean to do, Sheriff?

CONTINUED

121 CONTINUED

121

SHERIFF BLOUNT

I suppose they thought you were in the car and...well, Jessie you've been actin' mighty strange and they probably wanted to....

The Sheriff hesitates.

SAM

Teach me a lesson?

SHERIFF BLOUNT

They won't be botherin' you or yours, again. You've got my word on that.

Sam stares hard at the Sheriff.

OBSERVER

Let it go, Sam.

SAM

It's not good enough.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Damn it, Jessie. I'm telling you those boys are sorry.

OBSERVER

Don't push it Sam, it's gonna happen.

(beat)

Four months from now, Rosa Parks is gonna get arrested for not giving up her seat on a bus and Martin Luther King will organize the Montgomery boycotts.

SAM

Who are these... 'boys', Sheriff?

SHERIFF BLOUNT

She didn't know.

SAM

But you do.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Damn it, Jessie, I'm tellin' you they're sorry.

CONTINUED

121 CONTINUED (2)

121

SAM

Let them say it. And not to me. To Nell.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

(after a pause)

I said all I'm saying. Now get out of here, Jessie 'fore I change my mind.

Sam shakes his head and starts for the door, then stops and turns back.

SAM

You're going to have to change your mind, Sheriff...about a lot of things, including the end of segregation.

SHERIFF BLOUNT

Not in my lifetime.

Sam smiles and exits.

122 ON THE SHERIFF AND AL

122

The Sheriff looks very troubled and a little scared. Al grins and begins to sing "We Shall Overcome".

123 EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

123

Sam steps through the door and takes a deep breath.

124 SAM'S POV - MIZ MELNY'S BUICK

124

Parked across the street with Clayton and Miz Melny standing in front of it.

125 MOVING WITH SAM

125

As he crosses the square to the car.

SAM

Glad to see you got home all right, Miz Melny.

MIZ MELNY

No thanks to you. Goin' off, gettin' yourself arrested.

CONTINUED

125 CONTINUED

125

SAM

I won't let it happen again.

She hands him the keys.

CLAYTON

If it was up to me, you'd still be in jail.

MIZ MELNY

It's not up to you.

CLAYTON

Mama, Jessie's usin' you and if you can't see it, then...

MIZ MELNY

(cutting him off)

My relationship with Mister Tyler is my business, Clayton.

(beat)

Now go mind yours and I'll see you for supper.

Clayton is livid, but he knows better than to argue with his mother. He turns and walks away.

126 CLOSE ON SAM AND MIZ MELNY

126

As they watch Clayton walk away.

SAM

Thank you.

MIZ MELNY

I swear, sometimes I think they switched babies on me.

SAM

(laughs)

I didn't mean Clayton, I meant what you did for Nell at the hospital.

MIZ MELNY

(sincerely)

I was glad to do it, Jessie.

(beat)

And she's doin' fine. They moved her over to Vida this morning.

CONTINUED

SAM

(incredulous)

Moved her? She was in critical condition. A move could have killed her!

MIZ MELNY

Well it didn't. She's fine and she's with her own people and that's the way it's supposed to be.

(beat)

Now let's jus' forget about all this horrible incident and let things get back to normal.

SAM

How can your life go back to normal after yesterday?

(beat)

Miz Melny, you couldn't have done what you did without it opening your eyes.

MIZ MELNY

To what?

(beat)

To the fact that the world isn't just? I knew that Jessie. But my knowin' it, doesn't change it.

SAM

You changed it yesterday. And you could change it today and every day.

(beat)

I think that's why God wanted you to live.

MIZ MELNY

What in tarnation are you talkin' about?

SAM

I'm...I'm talking about your power to change the attitudes in this community.

MIZ MELNY

I'm too old to start changin' my attitude, let alone anybody else's.

SAM

That's a lie.

CONTINUED

126 CONTINUED (2)

126

MIZ MELNY

(losing it)

Enough!

(beat)

No employee of mine is gonna call me
a liar.

(beat)

Now if you want to go off and change
the world, you're welcome to it. But
if you want to work for me, we will
close this conversation forever.

(pointing)

Now....please, go over to Miz
Patty's and pick up my lunch.

127 CLOSE ON SAM

127

He's filled with anger and frustration.

SAM

(calmly)

Miz Melny. Once you've seen the
light you can't go back into the
darkness.

MIZ MELNY

(tight-lipped)

Get my egg salad, Jessie.

SAM

(after a beat)

Yes, Ma'am.

He turns and walks away and we hold on Miz Melny. She is a
very troubled woman.

128 INT. MIZ PATTY'S - DAY

128

It's buzzing with the usual luncheon customers, including
Sheriff Blount, Clayton, Billy Joe Bob and Toad. As the
door opens and Sam enters, the buzz stops. Each of them
look to Sam with their own set of attitudes.

129 FEATURE SAM

129

He looks at Billy Joe and Toad. Toad averts his eyes, but
Billy Joe has a slight smirk to his face. For a moment, it
looks like Sam might start a fight, then Miz Patty steps
forward.

CONTINUED

129 CONTINUED

129

MIZ PATTY

You here to pick up Miz Melny's
lunch Jessie?

SAM

I guess I am.

Sam walks to the counter and everyone smiles. Their world
is back to normal. As Miz Patty hands him the paper
bag....

MIZ MELNY'S VOICE

Never mind, Jessie.

130 FEATURE MIZ MELNY

130

She closes the door and crosses to the lunch counter.

MIZ MELNY

I've decided to eat it here.

The room is quiet again, sensing something is about to
happen. Miz Melny takes a seat at the counter.

MIZ MELNY

How are you, Miz Patty?

MIZ PATTY

Just fine, Ma'am. Would you like
somethin' to drink with the egg
salad?

MIZ MELNY

Some of your lemonade would be just
fine.

Sam feels like a third wheel, standing there. Miz Melny
isn't even looking at him. He finally turns and starts for
the door. After a few steps....

MIZ MELNY

Oh, Jessie....

She turns and looks up at him. Then, patting the stool
next to her....

MIZ MELNY

Can I buy you lunch?

131 ON SAM

131

He looks at all the shocked faces and with a smile, walks back to the counter.

132 ON THE PIE MIRROR

132

As we see Jessie sit beside Miz Melny.

SAM

Yes, Ma'am. You sure can.

As they reach for menus, we....

QUANTUM LEAP TO

133 CLOSE ON SAM

133

Hitting the ground, butt first. His eyes flash in a moment of reorientation.

134 WIDER ANGLE

134

He sits in a white tux and large feather-laden fedora, facing eight of the most gorgeous women imaginable, each dressed more provocatively than the next. There is a beat of surprise, and they all rush in to help him, each cooing his name as they help him to his feet.

GIRLS' AD-LIBS

Ben. Baby. Super stud, are you all right?

VOLUPTUOUS BLONDE

(baby talk)

Did Big Ben fall and hurt Doctor Wad?

135 FEATURING SAM

135

He looks around at the tacky, but lush apartment. He scrambles to his feet and searches for a mirror. The whole place is done in gold veined mirrors. One look tells it all. Sam throws his hands to the sky...

CONTINUED

135 CONTINUED

135

SAM
(incredulously)
I'm a pimp!

On the confused look of the girls, Sam shakes his head in disbelief as we..

FREEZE FRAME

THE END